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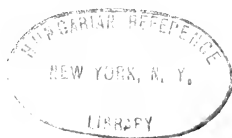


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*Henry Stevens says
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AN
AMERICAN VIEW
OF THE
EASTERN QUESTION.

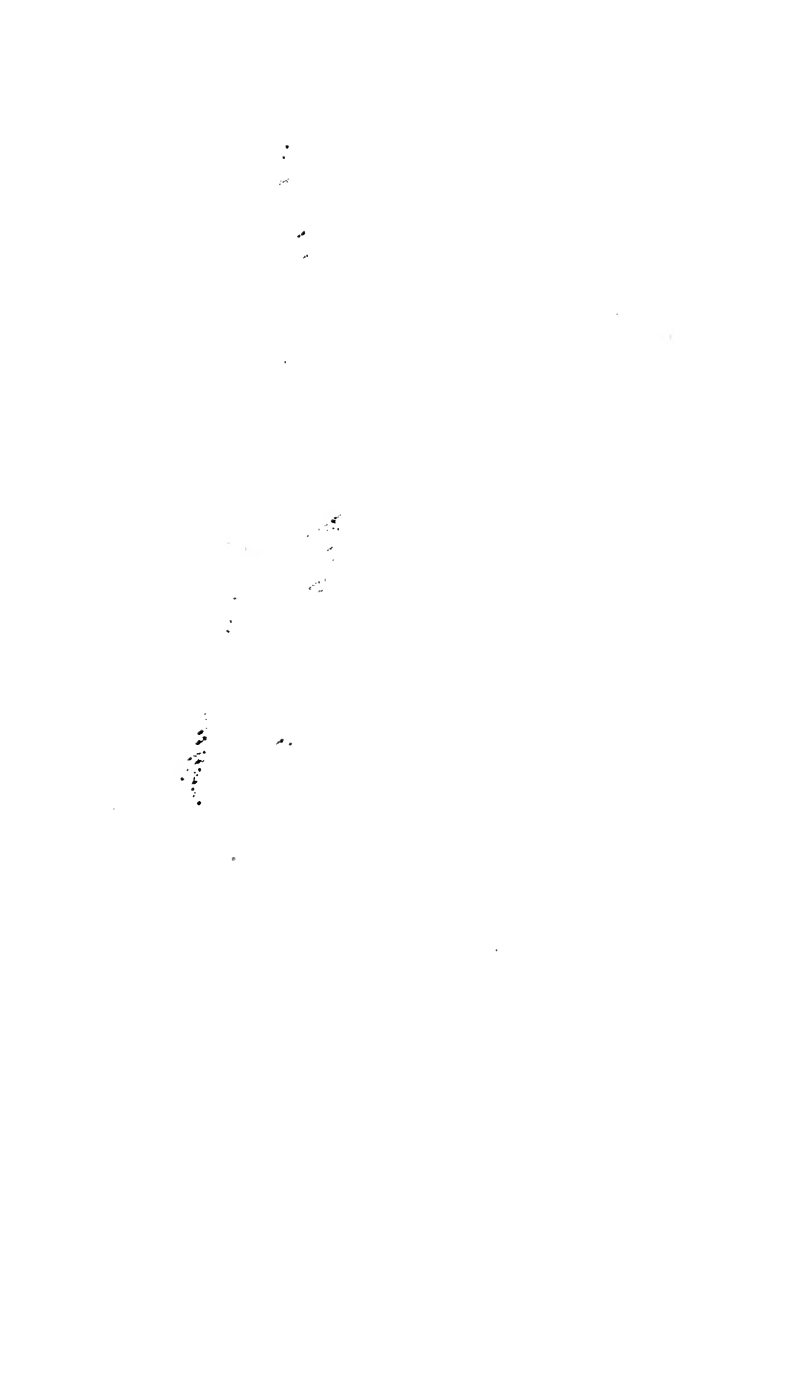
BY WM. HENRY TRESCOT.



CHARLESTON, S. C.
JOHN RUSSELL, KING-STREET.

1854.

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AMERICAN VIEW
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EASTERN QUESTION.

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AN AMERICAN VIEW
OF
THE EASTERN QUESTION.

WHEN, during one of the late debates in Parliament, the Earl of Aberdeen described the condition of England, by saying that the nation was not at war, but was drifting to war, his words might have been applied, with a wider and truer significance to the state of all Europe for the last forty years. And the history of this time, when it comes to be written, will shew that never has European diplomacy been more wisely or actively employed, than during this very period, in postponing the dreaded consummation. But it has proved beyond the power of human wisdom to control the issues of human passion; and after a peace of half-a-century, partially broken, it is true, by revolutionary struggles, a whole continent is again in arms. The Danube, whose shores have re-echoed the war cry of the Dacian barbarian, and the tramp of the Roman legion; upon whose turbid waters have gleamed the victorious light of Sobreski's sword, and the waning glory of the Turkish crescent, runs again, exulting to the Euxine, red with Christian blood; and the banners of England, France

and Russia, shaken from their trophied drapery, again "stream like meteors to the troubled air." The military salute fired over the last of Napoleon's marshals, has scarcely died upon the ear; the funeral pomp that marshaled England's great captain to the field of his only defeat, has not yet faded to the eye; Metternich and Nesselrode, the great draftsmen of the map of modern Europe, are still alive, but already has their work grown old. The foundations they laid have been broken up; the balance of power they adjusted is disturbed, and the world trembles in apprehension of a bloodier convulsion and a wilder change than in their day rocked the thrones of ancient empires, and inscribed on the ensanguined battle roll of history the names of Moscow and Waterloo.

The late news from Europe not only proves the existence of war, by the report of battles and the formal declaration of hostilities, but it justifies the gravest apprehensions of a protracted and universal war. The mission of Prince George of Mecklenberg, the last effort of the Czar to avoid or postpone the crisis, has failed. And this must be considered, on the part of the allied powers, as a declaration that they are resolved to make a new and wider settlement of the Eastern question, before they lay down their arms. They will not accept the *status quo ante bellum* as the basis of an arrangement; and as Russia cannot be expected to admit any other, it would seem that upon this contest her whole future power and policy are staked. Austria and Prussia have at last come to an explicit understanding. But

by signing with France and England the much talked of protocol, they have not committed themselves to the Western powers, but have simply indicated their readiness, in their own time and in their own interest, to abandon a neutrality which, in the interest of others, sooner or later, they would not be permitted to maintain. The insurrection in Greece, unquestionably encouraged by Russia, has become too formidable for the control of the Greek Government; has already embroiled Greece with Turkey; added another complication to the embarrassments of the Sultan, by forcing him to order all the Greek residents—neither few nor feeble for mischief—to leave his dominions, and may eventually compel an armed demonstration on the part of England and France. Sweden is evidently uneasy, and is already taking measures which look suspiciously towards the abandonment of her neutrality in the interest of Russia. Denmark, bound to Russia by the aid rendered in the affair of the Dutchies, has manifested very clearly to Sir Charles Napier her dissatisfaction at the presence of the combined fleets in the Baltic. The revolutionists of Lombardy and Hungary are alert, organised and almost desperate; while among the Turks themselves there is a strengthening discontent with the Sultan's reforms. "Menshikoff," say they, "came and asked for the Koran, and said, 'Strike out these texts.' The French and English come, and they say, 'Throw this book into the Bosphorus.'"*

* Since these introductory remarks were written, some modification has taken place in the relations of the European powers, between themselves. I have, however, left these observations as they stand, because no change

Lamentable as is this state of things, it is scarcely surprising. Events for the last forty years have been bringing on this war slowly, but surely, and nothing but the revolutionary dangers incident to general hostilities in Europe, have preserved peace so long among the rival nations. And it is therefore impossible to appreciate the present disturbed condition of Europe, or even to approximate towards a

in the position of the leading powers of Europe affects the argument attempted in the following pages, which rests entirely upon the past history of England and the diplomatic correspondence already exchanged. If the news be true that Austria and Prussia have joined in a treaty with the allied powers, one of two results seems to be certain: either, 1, that any marked and permanent success over Russia will dissolve a coalition representing such divergent interests as belong to the varied policies of England, France, Austria and Prussia; or, 2, that the influence of Austria and Prussia will be used to facilitate a settlement which will compromise Russia as little as possible. The history of Europe proves that the more extensive a coalition, the more brittle is its bond. Prussia has more than once before this shewn England what little obligation interest attaches to the most solemn treaties, and England has occasionally profited by the lesson. Besides which, the treaty, as reported in the papers, scarcely goes beyond the obligations of the protocol, and these obligations are in reference solely to the interests of Germany, as they may be endangered by the progress of the war. Indeed, some of the English papers have already said that this treaty is but the introduction to a renewal of negotiations on a new basis, and one adds: "While we are calculating upon the certainty of all the great powers being compactly allied against Russian policy, the Emperor of Russia has probably succeeded in changing the issue, and the controversy will be no longer as to the evacuation of the Turkish dominions, but on the recurrence to the *status quo*, or to a re-distribution of territory with the four powers divided on the question."

Besides the unsatisfactory nature of this condition of things, Greece is occupied by French troops, England seems likely to follow the same policy with Denmark, and the Times is busily employed in fomenting the differences between the Swedish Government and the people excited against Russia, in hope of obtaining a restoration of Finland.

reasonable opinion as to its probable results, without going further back than the recent controversy in Turkey.

The Congress of Vienna undertook no less a task than the re-construction of Europe; for the French revolution and its consequences interposed a great gulf between the Europe of 1815 and that defined in the treaties of Westphalia and Utrecht. The European system came out of the wars of 1800–1815, essentially changed, not merely in its relations, but in its very composition. Four new facts had been established, which must be assumed as the necessary basis of any future political arrangements. They were:—1. The extinction of the old German empire, which was, in truth, the centre of the former system. 2. The astonishing developement of Russia. 3. The consolidation of the British power in India, and consequent gigantic growth of her commercial influence; and 4. The presence, in every State of Europe, of an active, organised and radical revolutionary party. It would be difficult to find in the proceedings of Vienna any provision against the necessary consequence of such a condition of affairs. For, 1st, Instead of providing some substitute for the old centre furnished by the German empire, the Congress of Vienna left Germany divided into two factions—Austria and Prussia—supported by a crowd of small States, feeding their interests by a parasitical devotion to one or the other, and both striving for the autocracy of modern Germany. 2. Instead of placing some one strong power between Russia and Western Europe, Russia was allowed to incorporate

enough of Poland to bring her in contact with Prussia, as she already was with Austria, and thus placed in position to play upon the jealousy or weakness of either, to set one against the other, or to control both. 3rd. Instead of attempting to create some balance against the enormous and overgrown commercial power of England, France was both morally and physically diminished, and the commercial interests of Great Britain strengthened by the creation of a new kingdom out of Belgium and Holland, where English influence would be dominant. And lastly, while organizing a sort of royal police over the reforming spirit of Europe, the Congress added fresh fuel to the smouldering fire of the Italian revolutionists, by the most arbitrary and offensive violation of national feeling. Genoa, the superb, was degraded into the provincial sea-port of a second rate sovereignty; and Venice, the bride of the sea, submitted to the coarse grasp of an Austrian subaltern. Whether the actual solution of the difficult questions then calling for settlement, was the only practical one, ought to have been better known to the statesmen of that day, than it can be to students of this. But the results are ours, and are certain. The Congress of Vienna has proved little better than an armistice, and from St. Petersburg to Naples, from Paris to Constantinople, the last forty years have developed an agitated life of change, confusion, and revolution. Not only has much of the work of 1815 been undone, but it has been destroyed by its own creators. To use the strong language of Count Fiequelmont, "The two acts of the Congress of Vienna,

calculated to exercise the greatest influence on the future of central Europe, were the re-construction of Poland, and the creation of a kingdom of the low countries. These two new political bodies have been destroyed by the same powers who most largely contributed to their creation. It is Russia who willed, I will not say the restoration, but the re-construction of a Poland—it is Russia who has been brought to destroy her own work. It is England who labored most earnestly in the creation of the kingdom of the low countries, and took the new State under her special protection. It was the illustrious warrior to whose genius she owed so many victories, to whom was committed the organization of the military system of the new State, which England wished to erect into her first line of defence against France. This territory, circled by citadels, secured the communication between the armies of England and Germany. And it was England who eagerly seized the first occasion to destroy her own handiwork.”*

The absence of any real German unity, has given play to a rivalry between Austria and Prussia, dangerous not only to themselves, but to some of the gravest European interests—opened a field for the exhibition of the miserable folly of the Frankfort Parliament, and permitted the dishonest and disgraceful invasion of the rights of Denmark, in the Dutchies of Schleswig and Holstein.

France, Italy and Austria have been weakened and distracted by the fiercest civil commotion; and the present condition of Europe, in contrast with the

* “Lord Palmerston *l’Angleterre et le continent*,” vol. ii., p. 3.

provisions of the diplomacy of 1815, points, with painful emphasis, the moral of human foresight. One fact remains, indeed, unchanged: England and Russia were the controlling authorities at Vienna, and after half-a-century of change and controversy, they now front each other, in armed hostility, the rival powers of Europe. But how wide the difference between the courses of their respective policies and their resulting positions. With the exception of the United States, it may safely be said that Russia is the only power in the world with a fixed policy and a constant progress. England has strength, but she needs it all to hold her own. Her immense commercial development has given to her foreign policy a mercantile rather than a political character, and shifting her conduct to suit her interests, she has been forced to keep the police of Europe in the interest of Manchester and Liverpool. Russia, on the contrary, has devoted near two centuries of astute and systematic diplomacy to one idea—the extension of her empire to Constantinople. Twenty years have never passed, since her first step towards the Bosphorus, that she has not taken another, in advance. The fall of markets has not checked her progress—the complications of parliamentary strife have not disturbed her course—she has moved steadily on, “unchanged through all—unchangingly.” And not forgetting her object, she has yet contrived, not only to do justice, but to do efficient service, in Europe, to the cause of justice. In the case of Greece, as far as England was concerned, the Czar acted both wisely and too well. In the contest be-

tween Denmark and the Dutchies, he vindicated, efficiently and promptly, the treaties of Europe, while Lord Palmerston finessed England into a state of faithless imbecility. During the struggle in Austria, when the future fortunes of all Europe were compromised by a rash revolution, and while the same Lord Palmerston was contriving a modified policy which would have saved the Italian republicans, at the expense of the Hungarian, the Czar ended the contest by an armed interference, which preserved both to the Austrian crown. Of course, it would be easy to shew a direct interest, on the part of Russia, in every one of these questions; but who can deny the wisdom of a policy which, without weakening its own strength, made Russia the natural and necessary support of the conservatism of the world? It is true that Russia has systematically and successfully encroached on Turkey. Forced, by the character of her possessions, to seek an outlet into the world of commerce, confined in the Baltic by States whose rights she was bound to respect, and has respected, there was but one direction in which she could advance. Now, on this subject, if there is any people in the world who should avoid the cant of English *commercial* conservatism, we are that people. The history of the world is the history of encroachment, of invasion, of wrong, if you so will. "It must be that offenses come," but for him only who knoweth the whole counsel of God, is it to say, "Woe unto him by whom the offense cometh." This all history teaches: the strong and weak will not lie down to-

gether. You cannot bring into contact an earnest, living will, and a feeble, effete nature, without the absorption of the one into the other. Place England alongside of India, the United States by Mexico and Cuba, Russia by Turkey, and a half century of diplomacy or war will not, cannot prevent the inevitable result. The first principle of life is progress. As one of our own poets has well said—

“This, the true sign of ruin to a race—
It undertakes no march, and day by day
Drowzes in camp, or with a laggard’s pace
Walks sentry o’er possessions that decay :
Destined with sensible waste to fleet away ;—
For the first secret of continued power
Is the continued conquest.”—SIMMS.

We propose, therefore, to review rapidly the relations of England and Russia to Turkey, since the Congress of Vienna, in order to appreciate the value of their present relative positions. Turkey has never been considered as forming an element of the European balance of power. In 1791 Burke said, “He had never heard it said before that the Turkish empire was ever considered as any part of the balance of power in Europe. They had nothing to do with European policy—they considered themselves as wholly Asiatic. What had these worse than savages to do with the powers of Europe, but to spread war, destruction and pestilence among them? The ministry and policy which should give these people any weight in Europe, would deserve all the bans and curses of posterity. All that was holy in religion, all that was moral and humane demanded an

abhorrence of everything which tended to extend the power of the cruel and wasteful empire. Any Christian power was to be preferred to these destructive savages."

It would be interesting to trace the policy of Europe towards the Turks, from the time when, to the horror of Christendom, Francis the First made an ally of Solymán against Charles the Fifth, to the present day, when the Koran finds its safest refuge under the shadow of St. George's cross, but such a sketch would interfere too largely with our present purpose. It is sufficient now, that at the Congress of Vienna which terminated the long and fierce contest, at the commencement of which Mr. Burke used the memorable words which we have just quoted, the Sultan was not represented. He had not then entered the circle of civilized nations, and according to one of the ablest historians of that Congress, "the balance of power in the East was not confided to Congress."*

At the close of 1815, England was unquestionably the dominant power of the world—a great position, doubtless, but one which, in the history of empires, no nation has retained long, or held more than once. Her material resources were almost incalculable; her armies in the highest discipline, and brilliant with the trophies of an hundred victories; her navies floated upon the subject waters of almost every sea. In close alliance with her old companions, the States of the Baltic, she controlled the North-

* *Flassan Cong. de Vienne*, vol. ii: 114.

ern Ocean and the shores of Germany ; of the new kingdom of the low countries she had made a causeway into the heart of Europe ; while in possession of Gibraltar and Corfu and Malta, she threatened the Italian provinces of Austria, and claimed the Mediterranean as a subject lake. Her colonies, each a link in the long chain of her commercial dependencies, girdled the globe and bracing her strength, served also as conductors of her influence. Such power, Russia only could resist, because, except in the case of a general coalition, she was defended by all Europe, and through Turkey she had the means of offensive operations, without the necessity of violating the rights of her nearest neighbors. To this conflict Russia has resolutely addressed herself. Since 1815 there have been three questions directly affecting Turkey, in the solution of which, Russia and England have been immediate parties. The Greek insurrection—the war of 1828, between Russia and Turkey, terminated by the treaty of Adrianople—and the revolt of the Egyptian Pacha, or what is known as the Eastern question of 1841. Now, this whole series of transactions, (and among them we should include the colonization of Algiers as another illustration of the same principles,) indicated very clearly the position in which Europe, under the lead of England, intended to place the Turkish Empire. They established first—that Turkey was not able to maintain her own integrity—and secondly, that the European powers would modify her boundaries, or sustain her provincial authority as suited

their own interests, not hers. In other words—that Turkey was only a legal fiction in the name of which, certain territory should be held for the joint benefit of the great powers: the respective shares of each others' influence to be determined by their own diplomatic relations. More than this, the independence of Greece, and the treaty of Adrianople, the moderation of which must fairly be attributed to Russia herself, established distinctly the principle and policy of a progressive encroachment upon the Turkish Empire. For the freedom of Greece rested on the principle of Christian resistance to the oppressive power of Turkey, and its natural and logical inference promised the same privilege to Albania, Thessalia and the neighboring provinces, whenever they could organize a like resistance. Indeed, the unwise limitation of the boundaries of the new kingdom, and the refusal to annex Candia to Greece, where she naturally belongs, is to be attributed simply to the timid selfishness of the mediating powers: to which of those powers and selfishness was most specially to be credited, may be inferred from the offer of Candia to England in the late famous secret correspondence. While Greece was thus taken from Turkey, and, instead of being made strong enough for independent life, was placed in a condition of miserable dependence on Europe, the treaty of Adrianople regulated anew another portion of the Turkish territory. For, by its provisions, Moldavia and Wallachia were elevated into a quasi independence placed under the immediate influence of Russia, and

diplomatized into a position whence they must either degenerate into mere Russian provinces, or develope into the proportions of a new and independent Christian State. Of course, such a solution of these partial questions brought on worse complication.—The utter weakness of Turkey, ascertained by Europe, was soon made manifest in its own provinces. Mehemed Ali, the Pacha of Egypt, who had rendered great services to the Sultan during the Greek insurrection, was rewarded by the further addition to his Government, of the island of Candia. Wiser and stronger than his master, he too resolved on independence. A series of victories rapidly and brilliantly achieved, alarmed the great powers of Europe, and the whole machinery of European diplomacy was brought to bear on the Turkish question. The protracted and irritating conferences of the European powers on the Eastern question as it was then called, proved only too clearly the utter and insincere selfishness of their whole policy so far as any interest of Turkey was concerned, and demonstrated that though Russia might be as selfish as the rest, her policy was guided by an ability, reticence, and calm assured strength that could not finally fail in its ultimate objects. Let us examine these discussions more closely.

Mehemet Ali, under the pretence of subduing some rebellious Pachas, over-ran Syria, and, backed by a victorious army, made his demands upon the Sultan. They were refused. He crossed the Syrian frontier, defeated the Turkish army, and turned his conquering columns towards Constantinople. Terri-

fied at the prospect, the Sultan Mahmoud appealed to Russia for aid. It was promptly rendered, and on 20th February, 1833, the Russian fleet, sailing from Sebastopol, anchored at the mouth of the Bosphorus. At this crisis the French Ambassador arrived, and uneasy at the prospective results of such aid, insisted that the Russian fleet should retire. It did so; and France applied directly to Ibrahim, the son of Mehemet, and then in command of the Egyptian army, for a suspension of arms. It was granted, and negotiations followed. They were unsuccessful, and the army resumed its hostile march. Again Russian aid was invoked. The fleet again entered the Bosphorus, and fifteen thousand Russian soldiers disembarked at Scutari and took position between the Bosphorus and the Egyptian army. Alarmed, however, almost as much at the probable consequences of Russian help as at the approach of his revolted subject, to avoid the one, the Sultan came to terms with the other, and granted in full the demands of Mehemet Ali. The Egyptian army commenced its retreat in one direction, and Turkey's dangerous ally withdrew in the other. But the services rendered so promptly by Russia's advance, and the still greater service by her prompt retreat, disposed the Sultan favorably to the diplomatic proposals of Russia; and the treaty of Unkiar-Skelessi was the consequence. By this treaty Russia bound herself to defend Turkey against all enemies civil or foreign, and Turkey closed the Dardanelles to the armed vessels of all other foreign powers.—The immense advantage to Russia of such a treaty,

need not be pointed out. Mehemet Ali was not satisfied. He demanded the hereditary government of his provinces; for he was ambitious of becoming an independent prince. War was again imminent.—The great powers discouraged his ambition, but he persevered. The famous battle of Nezib terminated in the complete defeat of the Turkish army, the old Sultan died, and the Turkish Admiral by an act of unparalleled treachery, delivered the whole Ottoman fleet into the hands of the rebel Pacha at Alexandria. The fate of the Turkish Empire seemed rapidly approaching its crisis. But on the 23d July, 1839, a French messenger having again induced the victorious Ibrahim to pause, the representatives of the five great powers, Russia, England, France, Austria, and Prussia, addressed the following note to the new Sultan Abdnel Medjid: “The five ambassadors undersigned, in conformity with their instructions received yesterday from their respective courts, congratulate themselves on having to announce to the ministers of the Sublime Porte, that the agreement between the five powers touching the Eastern question is certain. And they entreat the Sublime Porte, in waiting for the fruits of their friendly disposition, (*leurs dispositions bienveillantes*) not to decide absolutely on the said question in a definite manner without their concurrence (*leur concours*).” Here, surely, one would think was a case in which, if the interests of Turkey were the object, the action of the mediators would have been prompt and unanimous. What was the fact? From July, 1838, when the note was sent, to July, 1841, when they agreed upon a

joint treaty, these great powers consumed their time in perpetual disputes and diplomatic intrigue. They could not agree on a policy to be executed, nor upon a plan of execution. A conference called to give peace to the East, came near embroiling all Europe in war. France, who most eagerly commenced the pacification, was diplomatized out of all participation in the concluding treaty; and the Eastern question was finally settled, more by the rough and ready responsibility of Sir Charles Napier, than by the subtle dexterity of the ambassadors at London.

For when, after the acceptance of their offer, the representatives of the Five Powers met, the Turkish Secretary of State exposed the weakness of the Empire; declared that they looked to Europe for their salvation, and thanking the Powers for their friendly intervention, submitted, as the first of his demands, that Syria should be restored to the Sultan; and very naturally. England and Austria sustained the demand. Russia and France opposed it. *They* demanded that Egypt and the Syrian Pachaliks should be given to Mehemet, with an hereditary title. Prussia sided with England and France. These conferences were finally adjourned to London, and the Four Powers combined against France. Russia did not wish to weaken Turkey too far at that time; for Europe was not ready for the partition. England not only did not wish to weaken Turkey as against Russia, but she was vehemently opposed to the growth of Mehemet Ali's power in Egypt. France, on the contrary, was anxious to make Mehemet Ali

an independent prince with Egypt and Syria, perhaps, because it reduced English influence in the Mediterranean, and on the India over-land route. In this, Russia at first agreed with her, but finding it easier to manage the English Cabinet than to oppose it, adopted English policy, and used it for her own purposes. Austria and Prussia acted on reasons it is not worth while to examine. Finding France steady in her purpose towards Mehemet Ali, the Czar, through Baron Brunow, induced England, by some concessions of the advantages obtained under the treaty of Unkiar-Skelessi, to exclude France from any further deliberation, and with herself, Austria and Prussia, to sign a treaty which would terminate the question. The treaty was signed. France was indignant, but submitted, and after some belligerent manifestations, acquiesced. Sir Charles Napier defeated the Egyptians on the shores of Syria, and upon the taking of St. Juan d'Acre, Mehemet Ali consented to the terms of the Sultan, by which he remained hereditary Pacha of Egypt; and thus another practical dismemberment of the Turkish Empire was effected. Thus, by 1842, in the name of the integrity of the Turkish Empire, Greece had been created an independent kingdom, Servia and Wallachia in a large degree enfranchised, and Egypt converted into an hereditary pachalik only nominally dependent on the Porte. And all this was done with the unanimous consent of the European Powers, acting in different directions, and in furtherance of divergent interests. Whatever of Turkey was left, was left only because the Great Powers could

not agree how it was to be divided. At this period then, it may be considered that the gradual extinction and absorption of Turkey, was a leading idea of European diplomacy. We are not discussing, and do not intend to discuss, the moral value of such a principle. We are simply reviewing the facts of the diplomatic history of that day. France had Algiers; English influence was dominant in Syria and Egypt; Greece was a constant protest against Turkish rule over Christian subjects; and the Slave provinces of Turkey were open to and prepared for Russian interference. Turkey herself was prostrate after more than ten years of constant warfare, and as constant defeat. In this condition of affairs, with a principle so obvious, and a policy so tempting, the Czar thought it wisest to prepare for the future—to avoid, if possible, the disturbance of Europe by any sudden and rude collision in the East, of interests which had by this time taken almost a traditional character. As his late experience had proved that Russia and England could control the Eastern question, to England he applied for counsel. And here we reach at last the famous memorandum of 1844. In analyzing this memorandum, and the correspondence on the questions arising in 1852 and '53, we certainly shall not follow the order of their publication, but their actual chronology. For Part v. of the Parliamentary documents, is really Part i. of the correspondence, and the English cabinet and press have derived no little advantage in their argument by this temporary suppression of the earlier papers.

In 1844, soon after the termination of the Egyp-

tian and Syrian difficulties, while the perplexities of that question were fresh in the memories of the Powers of Europe, the Czar visited England. During that visit, he had full and frank explanations with the ministry, as to the probable future of Turkey, and the proper policy in that regard, of the two Powers. The result of these conferences was summed up in a memorandum, and this memorandum, the Earl of Aberdeen stated in his speech of March 31, was sanctioned and approved by himself, the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel. The memorandum recites the anxiety of both powers for the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, states the difficulties which are most probable in the internal administration of Turkey, recommends a conciliatory but firm course of conduct on the part of the European powers, which would keep Turkey true to all her engagements, and then proceeds in the following distinct language:

“However, they must not conceal from themselves how many elements of dissolution that Empire contains within itself. Unforeseen circumstances may hasten its fall without its being in the power of the friendly cabinets to prevent it. As it is not given to human foresight to settle before-hand a plan of action for such or such unlooked-for case, it would be premature to discuss eventualities which may never be realized.

“In the uncertainty which hangs over the future, a single fundamental idea seems to admit of a really practical application; it is that the danger which may result from a catastrophe in Turkey will be

much diminished, if in the event of its occurring, Russia and England have come to an understanding as to the course to be taken by them in common.— That understanding will be the more beneficial, inasmuch as it will have the full assent of Austria. Between her and Russia there exists already an entire conformity of principles in regard to the affairs of Turkey, in a common interest of conservatism and of peace.

“In order to render their union more efficacious, there would remain nothing to be desired, but that England should be seen to associate herself thereto with the same view. The reason which recommends the establishment of this agreement is very simple.

“On land Russia exercises in regard to Turkey, a preponderant action.

“On sea England occupies the same position. Isolated, the action of these two powers might do much mischief. United, it can produce a real benefit: and hence the advantage of coming to a previous understanding, before having recourse to action. This notion was in principle agreed upon during the Emperor’s last residence in London. The result was the eventual engagement, that if anything unforeseen occurred in Turkey, Russia and England should previously concert together as to the course which they should pursue in common. The object for which Russia and England will have to come to an understanding, may be expressed in the following manner:

“1. To seek to maintain the existence of the Otto-

man Empire in its present state, so long as that political combination shall be possible.

“2. If we foresee that it must crumble to pieces, to enter into previous concert as to every thing relating to the establishment of a new order of things, intended to replace that which now exists; and in conjunction with each other, to see that the change which may have occurred in the internal situation of the Empire, shall not injudiciously affect either the security of their own States, and the rights which the treaties assure to them respectively, or the maintenance of the balance of power in Europe.

“For the purpose thus stated, the policy of Russia and of Austria as we have already said, is closely united by the principle of perfect identity. If England, as the principal maritime power, acts in concert with them, it is to be supposed that France will find herself obliged to act in conformity with the course agreed upon between St. Petersburg, London and Vienna.

“Conflict between the great powers being thus obviated, it is to be hoped that the peace of Europe will be maintained even in the midst of such serious circumstances. It is to secure this object of common interest if the case occurs; that as the Emperor agreed with her Britannic Majesty’s ministers during his residence in England, the previous understanding which Russia and England shall establish between themselves, must be directed.” Blue Book, Part VI., p.p. 3. 4:

We honestly think, that in view of the past, the Earl

of Aberdeen was warranted in saying: that supposing the Emperor right in his apprehension of the dissolution of Turkey, he saw "but that which is wise and moderate, and judicious in the memorandum." And when, in 1852, the difficulties arose concerning the Holy Places, the Czar, in perfect faith with this agreement, directly approached the British Government, and united the joint consultation thus provided for ten years before. And it must be recollected, at the outset of this examination, that Russia did not provoke this crisis. For Lord John Russell on 28th January, 1853, and after he had received the first secret dispatch from Sir Hamilton Seymour, detailing the commencement of the Emperor's confidential conversations, which reached him on the 23d of the same month, says to Lord Cowley, the British minister in Paris—"In the first place, Her Majesty's desire is, to abstain altogether from giving any opinion on the merits of the question. Treaties, Conventions and Firmans, are quoted with equal confidence on both sides. But Her Majesty's Government cannot avoid perceiving that the Ambassador of France at Constantinople was the first to disturb the *status quo* in which the matter rested.—Not that the disputes of the Latin and Greek Churches were not very active, but that without some political action on the part of France, those quarrels would never have troubled the relations of the friendly powers.

"In the next place, if report is to be believed, the French ambassador was the first to speak of having recourse to force and to threaten the intervention of

a French fleet, to enforce the demands of his country." Blue Books, Part 1., p. 67.

It is impossible of course to enter at large into the technical perplexities of such questions, as to whether the key of the Church at Bethlehem should be entrusted to the Latin Bishop, or to the Greek Patriarch. But this much is clear to all, that as Turkey holds her place in the political world, only by the mutual sufferance of the European powers, the practical question with them is, as to balance of their respective influence with the Sublime Porte; and as the influences of Russia and France are represented through the privileges of the Greeks and Latins, of whom they are the representatives, questions of apparent insignificance assume importance, as indicating the real power of these several courts. Now, it appears that in 1852, the French Government was not satisfied with the *status quo* of these two parties, and made certain demands in favor of the Latins upon the Porte. Russia considered these demands as inadmissible. The Porte fearful of offending either, hesitated and prevaricated with both. France and Russia both grew angry. France threatened force, and Russia prepared to use it. The Czar believing that he saw danger of a rupture, the consequences of which might extend further than the abstract value of the questions indicated, thought that the case provided for in the memorandum, had occurred, and through Sir Hamilton Seymour opened the consultation to which England and himself were pledged. The first secret dispatch of Sir Hamilton Seymour is dated 11th January, 1853, and

the question of the Holy Places assumed its very grave character towards the close of 1852, at which time Russia had evidently begun to make preparations for hostilities. Upon the appreciation of these confidential disclosures will depend the character of Russia's conduct; for her intentions, as manifested in them, will give color to her after proceedings. They require, therefore, a careful analysis. These conversations was of course opened by the Czar, and on his part were directed to three points. First—the expression of his strong desire, that in any future policy towards Turkey, himself and the English Government should be in perfect accord. Second—the declaration of his belief that the condition of the Turkish Empire was such, that at any moment, a revolution of the Christians, or a complicated dispute between any of the leading powers of Europe on a Turkish question, would lead to sudden collapse of the Ottoman Empire. And third—an invitation to the English Government to discuss fully and frankly the consequences of such an occurrence, in order to come to some general principles which should regulate their action. And referring to one point of special importance, he said: “Frankly then, I tell you plainly, that if England thinks of establishing herself one of these days at Constantinople, I will not allow it. I do not attribute this intention to you, but it is better on these occasions to speak plainly: for my part I am equally disposed to take the engagement, not to establish myself there, as proprietor, that is to say; for as occupier, I do not say: *it might happen that circumstances, if no previous*

*provision were made, if every thing should be left to chance, might place me in the position of occupying Constantinople.”**

Sir Hamilton Seymour sums up the value of these conversations fairly, when he says :

“With regard to the extremely important overture to which this report relates, I will only observe, that as it is my duty to record impressions, as well as facts and statements; I am bound to say, that if words, tone and manner offer any criterion, by which, intentions are to be judged, the Emperor is prepared to act with perfect fairness and openness towards Her Majesty’s Government. His Majesty has, no doubt, his own objects in view; and he is, in my opinion, too strong a believer in the imminence of dangers in Turkey. I am, however, impressed with the belief, that in carrying out those objects, and in guarding against those dangers, His Majesty is sincerely desirous of acting in harmony with Her Majesty’s Government. I would now submit to your lordship, that this overture cannot with propriety pass unnoticed by Her Majesty’s Government. It has been on a first occasion glanced at, and on a second distinctly, made by the Emperor himself to the Queen’s minister at his court, whilst the conversation held some years ago with the Duke of Wellington, proves that the object in view, is one which has long occupied the thoughts of his Imperial Majesty. If then, the proposal were to remain unanswered, a decided advantage would be secured to the Imperial Cabinet, which, in the event of some great

*Blue Books, Part vi., p. 4.

catastrophe taking place in Turkey, would be able to point to proposals made to England, and which not having been responded to, *left the Emperor at liberty, or placed him under the necessity of following his own line of policy in the East.*

“Again I would remark, that the anxiety expressed by the Emperor, even looking to his own interests for an extension of the days ‘of the dying man,’ appears to me to justify Her Majesty’s Government in proposing to His Imperial Majesty, to unite with England in the adoption of such measures as may lead to prop up the failing authority of the Sultan. Lastly, I would observe that even if the Emperor should be found disinclined to lend himself to such a course of policy as might arrest the downfall of Turkey, his declarations to me pledge him to be ready to take before-hand, in concert with Her Majesty’s Government, such precautions as may possibly prevent the fatal crisis being followed by a scramble, for the rich inheritance which would remain to be disposed of.

“A noble triumph would be obtained by the civilization of the nineteenth century, if the void left by the extinction of Mahomedan rule in Europe could be filled up, without an interruption of the general peace, in consequence of the precautions adopted by the two principal Governments, the most interested in the destinies of Turkey.”*

To this dispatch, Lord John Russel replied on the 9th February, 1853. He was “happy to acknowledge the moderation, the frankness, and the friend-

*Blue Books, Part vi., p. 5, 6.

ly disposition of His Imperial Majesty ;” and repeats distinctly and fairly the point of the Imperial communication. “The question raised by His Imperial Majesty is a very serious one. It is supposing the contingency of the dissolution of the Turkish Empire to be probable, or even imminent ; whether it is not better to be provided before-hand for a contingency, than to incur the chaos, confusion, and the certainty of an European war ; all of which must attend the catastrophe, if it should occur unexpectedly and before some ulterior system has been sketched :” And this “ulterior system” he declines to join in sketching, for the reasons he gives, viz : 1. Because “no actual crisis has occurred, which renders necessary a solution of this vast European problem.” 2. The impossibility of making any arrangement without the participation of the other leading European powers. 3. Because any such arrangement would only hasten the catastrophe it was intended to avoid. And he concludes by stating “that no course of policy can be adopted more wise, more disinterested, more beneficial to Europe, than that which His Imperial Majesty has so long followed, and which will render his name more illustrious than that of the most famous Sovereigns, who have sought immortality by unprovoked conquest and ephemeral glory.” After this dispatch, the conversations were still conducted through Sir Hamilton Seymour, and the Czar opened himself more fully. “I will not” said he “tolerate the permanent occupation of Constantinople by the Russians : having said this, I will say, that it never shall be held by the English or French, or any other

great nation. Again—I never will permit an attempt at the re-construction of a Byrantine Empire, or such an extension of Greece as would render her a powerful State—still less would I permit the breaking up of Turkey into little republics; asylums for the Kossuths and Mazzinis, and other revolutionists of Europe; rather than submit to any of these arrangements, I would go to war, and as long as I have a man and a musket left would carry it on.”

* * * * * “The Emperor went on to say, that in the event of the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, he thought it might be less difficult to arrive at a satisfactory territorial arrangement than was commonly believed. The Principalities are, he said, in fact an independent State under my protection—this might so continue. Servia might receive the same form of Government. So again with Bulgaria—there seems to be no reason why this province should not form an independent State. As to Egypt—I quite understand the importance to England, of that territory. I can then only say, that if in the event of a distribution of the Ottoman succession upon the fall of the Empire, you should take possession of Egypt, I shall have no objections to offer. I would say the same thing of Candia—that Island might suit you; and I do not know why it should not become an English possession. As I did not wish that the Emperor should imagine that an English public servant was caught by this sort of overture, I simply answered that I had always understood that the English views upon Egypt, did not go beyond the point of securing a safe and ready

communication between British India and the mother country." In fact, the summing of this whole very remarkable series of conversations, may be accurately stated on the part of Russia, in the language of the memorandum furnished Sir Hamilton Seymour by Count Nesselrode, February 12, 1853; and, on the part of England, in the language of the dispatch of Lord Clarendon to the same ambassador, on March 23, 1853.

The memorandum concludes: "In short, the Emperor cannot but congratulate himself at having given occasion for this intimate interchange of confidential communications between Her Majesty and himself. He has found therein value assurances, of which he takes note with lively satisfaction. The two Sovereigns have frankly explained to each other what, in the extreme case of which, they have been treating of their respective interests cannot endure. England understands that Russia cannot suffer the establishment at Constantinople of a Christian power sufficiently strong to control and disquiet her. She declares that for herself, she renounces any intention or desire to possess Constantinople. The Emperor equally disclaims any wish or design of establishing himself there. England promises that she will enter into no arrangements for determining the measures to be taken, in the event of the fall of the Turkish Empire, without a previous understanding with the Emperor. The Emperor on his side willingly contracts the same engagement; as he is aware, that in such a case, he can equally reckon upon Austria who is bound by her promises to concert with him, he

regards with less apprehension the catastrophe which he still desires to prevent and avert, as much as it shall depend on him to do so."

Lord Clarendon's dispatch says: "Her Majesty's Government have accordingly learnt, with sincere satisfaction, that the Emperor considers himself even more interested than England, in preventing a Turkish catastrophe: because they are persuaded, that His Imperial Majesty towards Turkey will mainly depend the hastening or indefinite postponement, of an event which every power in Europe is concerned in averting. Her Majesty's Government are convinced that nothing is more calculated to precipitate that event, than the constant prediction of its being near at hand; that nothing can be more fatal to the vitality of Turkey, than the assumption of its rapid and inevitable decay; and that if the opinion of the Emperor, that the days of the Turkish Empire were numbered became notorious, its downfall must occur even sooner than His Imperial Majesty appears now to expect.

"But on the supposition, that from unavoidable causes the catastrophe did take place, Her Majesty's Government entirely share the opinion of the Emperor; that the occupation of Constantinople by either of the great powers, would be incompatible with the present balance of power and the maintenance of peace in Europe, and must at once be regarded as impossible; that there are no elements for the re-construction of a Byrantine Empire, that the systematic misgovernment of Greece offers no encouragement to extend its territorial dominion; and

that as there are no materials for provincial or communal government, anarchy would be the result of leaving the provinces of Turkey to themselves, or permitting them to form separate republic." The dispatch considers "that the simple pre-determination of what shall not be tolerated, does little towards solving the real difficulties, or settling in what manner it would be practicable, or even desirable to deal with, the heterogeneous materials of which the Turkish Empire is composed;" and his Lordship declares that "England desires no territorial aggrandisement, and could be no party to a previous arrangement from which she was to derive any such benefit.—England could be no party to any understanding however general, that was to be kept secret from other powers." At the close then of these conversations, that is, about the time of Prince Menschikoff's mission, the history of Europe since 1815, and the diplomatic papers exchanged between Russia and England, had established three facts. 1. That since the Congress of Vienna, a steady and gradual dismemberment of the Turkish Empire had been effected by the joint action of the great powers. 2. That Russia and England distinctly recognizes as one of the probable eventualities of European politics the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, and pledged themselves to a joint consultation, with a view to joint action in such an emergency. 3. That the English Ministry (see the dispatch of Lord John Russell already quoted) acknowledged the existence of a critical and complicated state of affairs in Turkey, threatening the mutual relations of the

great powers, and brought on by the rash action of the French Government. And it must also be borne in mind that Lord Clarendon had expressly stated, that "if the opinion of the Emperor, that the days of the Turkish Empire were numbered, became notorious, its downfall must occur even sooner than His Imperial Majesty appears now to expect." Now, this opinion the Czar did hold and did express; so that, according to the principles laid down by the British Government itself, the contemplated crisis was at hand. The justice of Russia's position at this moment depends upon two questions. 1. Whether Russia had in good faith carried out the agreement contained in the memorandum of 1844, by which she bound herself to consult with England in case of certain eventualities. 2. And whether the principles upon which she proposed an agreement were fair and honest. The first question has already been answered in the dispatch of Sir Hamilton Seymour first quoted, from the highest authority, and in the most unequivocal manner. To the second then, let us address ourselves. It has been urged that the dishonesty of these overtures is evident from the deliberate exclusion of the other great powers. England herself furnishes a complete reply to this charge, both in words and deeds. For in 1841, in arranging the Eastern question of that day, she acted heartily with Russia, not in excluding France from informal deliberations, but in fraudulently shutting France out from participation in a treaty, to the preliminary steps of which France had been a constant and deeply interested party; and this she did under

the influence of Russian diplomacy, and very nearly at the expense of the peace of Europe. And in the memorandum of 1844, approved, it must be remembered, by Wellington, Peel and Aberdeen, she entered into a distinct agreement with Russia, on the ground that Russia and herself were all-powerful in the East, to discuss their future policy together, and has put upon that record the emphatic declaration—"If England, as the principal maritime power, acts in concert with them (i. e., Russia and Austria,) it is to be supposed that France will find herself obliged to act in conformity with the course agreed upon between St. Petersburg, London and Vienna." We need scarcely say, that at that time Vienna and St. Petersburg were so identical, that the former might have been stricken out of the sentence without weakening its force—and that Prussia was not even referred to by either of the contracting parties. If France, then, was excluded from the discussion, the memorandum of 1844 had worked the exclusion.

It is next declared that the proposals of the Czar amount to an iniquitous proposition to partition the territory of an independent and allied power in a time of profound peace, and without sufficient provocation. Now we might well remark, that this moral sensibility would have exerted a better influence if a little sooner manifested; and that after the independence of Greece, Egypt, and the provinces, its sudden exhibition may be the miraculous cure of a moral paralysis that seemed almost hopeless with the great powers; but it may also be the hypocritical indignation of a very selfish virtue. But the truth

is, Turkey is *not* an independent power, and is only so far an allied one, that the great powers in their own interest have combined to preserve it, until they can agree upon the distribution of its territory. The Turks have no part in Europe; they share neither its civilization, its interests, nor its policy; and if we are to look for the criminal selfishness of European politics, it will be found in the miserable cant of "the integrity of the Ottoman Empire." The great powers of Europe have stood like an armed police on the borders of this country, to prevent the natural and necessary development of its Christian population; and they have combined in fear, not of Turkey, but of an independent Christian power which should re-assume the Byzantine diadem. Russia and England both agree in this wish, however this material difference. Russia is willing to create a set of independent provinces under her protectorate. England prefers the preservation of Turkish rule over the same provinces. The history of Europe and the diplomatic language of each of the great powers, prove that the *final* extinction of Turkish rule is considered one of the established facts of European policy; and even now, while France and England take arms to defend the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, they call for concessions which amount almost to a national conversion, which must end in revolution, and either leave Turks, Greeks, Armenians and Latins, to tear each other to pieces, with all the fervor of religious zeal, and the intensity of civil hatred, or call the allied powers in to measure out the territory, and re-adjust the authority of an Empire without

subjects, and a people without a country : for we are told, on high authority, that even now the highest ambition of a Christian rajah, is to become the subject of a foreign power. To talk about Turkey as an independent power, having a recognized place in the European system like Austria or Prussia, or even like Belgium or Switzerland, is to use language contradicted by every fact of European history, and every sentence in the Eastern dispatches of European diplomacy. The extinction of Turkey as the land of Ottoman rule, is simply a matter of time. Russia and England, France, Austria and Prussia, have long since resolved upon its consummation. And England, even that England, who, in the language of Lord Clarendon, "desires no territorial aggrandizement, and could be no party to a previous arrangement from which she was to derive any such benefit," will not come out of this war victorious, as she has never come out of any other, without "dividing the prey." And we honestly believe that both she and they are right ; that no principle of justice, no interest of civilization calls for the preservation of Turkey. The Turks came with the sword, let them go by the sword ; wherever they spread, cruelty camped under their tents, and desolation was the shadow of their banners. In the annals of their barren and bloody history, we can find nothing that they have preserved—nothing that they have achieved. Ferocious in their strength, and false in their weakness, tyranny and treachery make the antithesis of their chronicles. Like the repulsive creations of their own fiction, the vampire and the ghoul, they have sucked

the substance of the fairest portions of the world to prolong a monstrous and abhorred life, and feasted among the tombs of ancient and renowned nations. And when they shall have been expelled from the soil they desolate, and from among the people they oppress, history will only have recorded another example of God's retributive justice. It is, however, when that destruction shall be accomplished, that the true policy of Europe will show itself, and the world will learn whether the great powers would govern in a spirit of wise and honest statesmanship, or short-sighted and greedy selfishness. The dissolution of the Turkish Empire, therefore, is not the crime of Russia; but the use which she proposes to make of that event, must determine the moral character of her policy. What, then, is the nature of her proposals? And it must not be forgotten that conversations contain no distinct propositions; they include and were intended to convey only an exchange of opinions as the basis of future agreement. Were they just towards the various people who have hitherto lived subject to Turkish rule, and were they in harmony with that principle of European policy, which forbids the sudden and disproportionate growth of any one of its leading powers? The idea suggested by Russia in these conversations was, that in case of the dissolution of the Turkish Empire, as neither England nor herself could hold Constantinople, the Christian population of Turkey with the Slave provinces should be formed into independent governments under a Russian protectorate, while Egypt and Candia should become English provinces.

As far as the Christian population of Turkey is concerned, such an arrangement would be a great gain. They would at once be delivered from the degrading tyranny of Turkish rule; and although still governed to a great degree by a foreign will, they would be governed in sympathy with their faith and habits, and in view of their own interest. For it is clear, that the interest of Russia would be to develop the commercial and agricultural resources of these countries to their fullest extent; and the use which Russia has already in her history made of her gigantic power in promoting art, commerce and industry, is a sufficient guarantee of the future. It is admitted on all sides, that the elements of a new Byzantine Empire do not at present exist. What better, then, could happen to the Slave provinces of Turkey, than the quasi independence of a Russian protectorate? Under such protection they would either become gradually integral parts of the Russian Empire, or they would form by consolidation among themselves a new kingdom, with its capital at Constantinople. Which of these results would occur would depend upon the interests of the Slave population themselves. In the meantime, Russia is specially adapted for their guardianship. It would be Russian interest to develop their resources, and to perfect their military strength and commercial capabilities. They would preserve under Russian rule more of their native habits and peculiar institutions, than under any other power; for Russia is, in fact, a vast confederacy of differing nationalities. It has been very justly and very well said, that "Ruling over eighty

different nations or tribes, the autocrat of all the Russias claims the allegiance of people of every variety of race, tongue and religion. Were it possible to transport to one common centre of his Empire the gay opera loungeur of St. Petersburg, habited in the Parisian mode; the fierce Bashkir of the Ural mountains, clad in rude armor, and armed with bow and arrows; the Armenian, with his camel from the Southern steppes; and the Esquimaux, who traverses with his dogs the frozen regions of the North; these fellow subjects of one potentate would encounter each other with all the surprise and ignorance of individuals meeting from England, China, Peru, and New Holland; nor would the time or expense incurred in the journey be greater in the latter than in the former interview." Now Russia, on this vast and varied field of labor, with what was originally a barbarous aristocracy, and a brutal serfage, has achieved miracles; she has built splendid cities, created a wide and rich commerce, nourished great statesmen, and given birth to renowned warriors; she has improved the manners, increased the comforts, and as far as possible ameliorated the condition of her people; and in doing all this, while she has of necessity centralized to an almost incredible degree the power by which she acts, she has not destroyed these peculiar habits, nor obliterated the native nationality of any one of her component people.

The Slave provinces of Turkey, are not, it is admitted, ready for independence—they cannot yet consolidate into one free, firm government. What

better condition, then, could be found than a quasi independence under the protection of Turkey, which would enable them in the pursuit of their own interests to develop either into Russian provinces, or into the centre of a new European State as the wants of the future may require? We cannot realize, we must confess, the existence of one Empire with two capitals, like St. Petersburg and Constantinople, and would consider even the unmodified absorption of Turkey into Russia but as one stage in that constant process of growth and dissolution, which has marked the history of all the great Empires of the world. But whether Russia is destined to absorb Turkey, and to become the vast Empire that terrifies European diplomacy, or whether she is destined to divide into two great kingdoms in the East of Europe, we cannot feel a doubt that, as far as the interests of the Christian population of Turkey is concerned, the change from the rule of the Sultan to the dominion of the Czar, is to them a change for a better, freer and higher political life. It must be noticed also, that while the Czar claims the gradual incorporation of those populations between whom and himself there exists the sympathy of race and faith, he is willing to relinquish the sovereignty of Egypt to England. He recognizes the truth of that principle, by which England has conquered India—the domination of the Anglo-Saxon race in its contact with the inferior nature of the Asiatic people.

Wherever the English settler lands, he conquers—he never incorporates, he subjects. Now the Turkish

possessions cover two classes. 1. The Christian population of Turkey in Europe, who have in themselves the elements of life, activity, and prosperity : These, the Czar says, must be incorporated into an Empire understanding, and sharing their sympathies. 2. The Mahometan populations of Asia and Egypt : These have no vitality drawn from the past, no progress to be hoped for the future : they must be the subjects of Christian civilization ; and he accordingly delivers them to the great Colonial nation of the world, whose commerce will renew, whose colonial genius will govern, and whose maritime power will protect, the trade, life and territory, of these conquered countries, until they shall have been re-created by English capital and enterprise for a newer and more vigorous life. If, then, this scheme was just, as concerned the Christian provinces of Turkey, was it a fair proposition, in reference to the balance of power ?—Taking for granted the principles of this very indefinite system called the balance of power, we might fairly object to the theory of that system which confounds the balance of European power with the balance of the world. England herself, by the vast extension of her colonial Empire, an expansion which, taken together with her maritime force, is equivalent to the territorial increase of any other nation of the world, has disturbed the old balance, and by extending herself in all parts of the globe, has brought all parts of the globe into the relations of this system. Having done so, she must adjust the balance on a new and larger scale. But we do not intend now to dwell on that point of view. We assume the Euro-

pean stand-point, and would remark, first, that the balance of power is a defensive system; not to prevent change, but to forbid oppression. The gradual, natural growth of any one nation, is not in violation of its principles, be the degree of power to which it attains ever so exaggerated, as is proved by the history of England herself. England came out of the wars of 1815 with immensely increased strength; both military and moral. She naturally, necessarily, without fraud or force, developed her commercial capabilities, and her colonial Empire, until she has become the greatest nation that history has recorded. This progress was owing, not only to her wealth, intellect, and enterprise, but to the exemption from the desolation of war, within her own borders, which had ravaged the continent from Moscow to Madrid, consuming its wealth, palsying its energy, and shutting out all field for the exertions of peaceful and industrial genius. With such a start, England has distanced Europe, and her power has grown with her prosperity, and on account of her prosperity. But a half-century of peace has been rapidly improved by all the relations of Europe; and at their head stands Russia, who has developed her energies with gigantic efforts. The natural result is, that as Europe approximates to the prosperity of England, the power of Europe and England becomes more equally balanced, and the very same principles which, in their successful working from 1815 on, have made England the great power of the world, are in their extension bringing other powers more nearly to an equality. Now any change thus effected, is a legiti-

mate and natural variation of the balance to be corrected, or confirmed by the progress of time; and any change in the relative power of England springing from the gradual increase of any other national prosperity, is just and proper. And it seems to us, that it cannot be denied that some such process has been at work in Europe, and that English influence, which has been dominant for the last half-century, is about to be naturally and necessarily modified. The increase, then, of Russian influence, is not of itself a proof that the balance of power has been irregularly disturbed. The question should be—does the action of Russia threaten to subordinate the power of England, so as to neutralize or to destroy a necessary element in that balance? not whether the power of England is diminished—for the balance itself may call for such diminution—but whether any power is to be strengthened into an autocracy? Now the Russian scheme, if it increased the power of Russia, did not certainly diminish the power of England.—For even if it be granted that Russia would possess Constantinople, its natural power as the mistress of such a situation would be materially modified, by the neighborhood of England's great maritime power at Alexandria. And if Candia be added to Malta, Corfu and Gibraltar, she would indeed be ruler of the Mediterranean. As far, therefore, as the relative proportion of Russian and English power would affect the general balance, it must be admitted that the proposed scheme preserved the old proportions in its development. We think, then, that at the close of the conversations between the Czar and the

British ambassador, Russia had fulfilled all her obligations to England, frankly and faithfully. A case had arisen which, in the opinion of the Russian Emperor, met the provisions of the memorandum of 1844. The crisis had, according to Lord John Russell, been unprovoked by Russia, and forced on France—it had assumed a very grave character. The Emperor called upon England for consultation and advice. He stated his opinions frankly, and without asking for any action which should initiate the destruction of the Ottoman Empire; he simply suggested the basis of a future understanding; and the leading ideas of his scheme, as we have shown, combined justice to the constituent elements of the Turkish Empire, with due regard to the preservation of European balance. England declined the responsibility of concerted action, and thus afforded the Czar the advantage pointed out by the British minister; and in his own words, which will form the verdict of history, “*left the Emperor at liberty, or placed him under the necessity of following his own line of policy in the East.*”

And we insist the more strenuously upon this view, because from this stand-point only can we perceive the full character and consequence of Prince Menschikoff's mission. For upon this Turkish question Russia was forced to act either in concert with England, or alone. The concert which she sought was refused, and her own independent action was the only course left open. What influence, then, had Europe a right to exercise upon the relations of Turkey and Russia? and what restraint had Europe

a right to put upon Russian policy? And here again we must repeat, that the whole policy of Europe in the East, has been based upon two principles. 1. The final extinction of the Ottoman Empire—and 2, the presence of a certain degree of Russian influence over the Slave provinces of Turkey, as one of the elements to govern the future distribution of Turkish territory. The conversations and private correspondence between Russia and England began in January, and may be considered as terminated in April, 1853. Prince Menschikoff received orders in February to prepare for his immediate departure to Constantinople. And towards the close of May, having failed in his mission, he withdrew from Constantinople. What difference was there between the Russian representation of his mission and its reality? Prince Menschikoff's mission ran parallel in point of time with the confidential communications to which we have already referred; and the correspondence in relation to it establishes two points: 1. That in the settlement of the Holy Places, while the Emperor declared that he would not require the withdrawal of any advantages gained by the French court, he distinctly announced that his leading object would be to obtain an *equivalent* for any such concessions—and 2, that in expectation of difficulty, the Czar did openly commence military preparations to meet any such emergency.

“In speaking to me yesterday,” says Sir Hamilton Seymour, on February 10, 1853, “of Prince Menschikoff's instructions, which were again represented to be moderate in their character, the Chancellor ob-

served that there was necessarily some vagueness in his orders; as on one side it was hardly ascertained to what extent the rights secured last year to the Greeks had been infringed; and on the other, there could be no question of attempting to regain from the Latins any of the privileges which they might subsequently have acquired at Jerusalem. *The object to be sought for was, therefore, an equivalent for any privilege lost by the Greeks.*" Blue Books, Part 1, 79. On March 24, 1853, Lord Cowley, the British ambassador at Paris, says, "assurances are given that there is no intention on the part of Russia to disturb any arrangement made between France and the Porte in regard to the sacred buildings; *but it is laid down that if concessions have been made to the Latins, an equivalent will be required for the Greeks.* The whole tenor of the correspondence shows further that the Emperor of Russia has no hostile feeling towards Turkey, and is anxious for the maintenance of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire." Blue Book, Part 1, 96. And again, on March 31, the same ambassador, repeating the substance of the French dispatches from Constantinople, says: "He said that after the positive assurances given by the Russian Government, that there was no intention on their part to procure any retractation of the concessions made to France, the French Government were perfectly satisfied. The latter, moreover, had no pretension to interfere with any concessions which the Porte might think fit to accord, in compensation to the Greeks, unless the independence of Turkey should thereby be threatened, and even then it would

be a case for the consideration of the great powers of Europe collectively, and not of France individually." Idem, p. 100, 101.

That England was aware of the military preparation of Russia, is evident in nearly all of the dispatches from St. Petersburg. On April 7th, 1853, Sir Hamilton Seymour writes to the Earl of Clarendon, "I observed that with the peaceful prospects which were now opening on us, I flattered myself His Excellency could now give me the assurance that military preparations were laid aside; at all events that there was some commencement of discontinuance of military preparation. Count Nesselrode replied that *he did not feel at liberty to give me that assurance*, but that he did not hesitate to express to me his own conviction, that the negotiation at Constantinople would be brought, and speedily, to a happy conclusion." Idem, 142.

And Lord Clarendon himself, in his dispatch of May 31, to Sir Hamilton Seymour, says: "The negotiations at Constantinople have been supported by great demonstrations of force, and every preparation for war has been made in the Southern provinces of Russia. *Great Britain has long been a quiet spectator of those armaments*; but now that the relations between Russia and Turkey are broken off, it becomes our duty to ascertain, &c., &c." Idem, 203.

During the whole of the discussions, therefore, it is clear that Prince Menschikoff's mission, "supported by great demonstrations of force," had for its open and avowed object, the attainment of "*an equivalent*" for the Greeks. What must have been included

in such an object? As long as the so-called integrity of the Ottoman Empire is preserved, the difficulty always must be to preserve the *status quo* of the contrariant influences of the European courts in Constantinople. Upon the proper and natural balance of these influences, indeed depends that integrity; and this was the principle of the treaty of 1841—a treaty, it must be recollected, signed without the knowledge, and against the interest of France, and to which she gave, finally, a forced and sullen acquiescence. From the treaty of 1841 to 1852, the action of natural causes has modified the balance of these influences. The very elements of influence recognised in that treaty, were gradually developing a modification of the relation of its parties in regard to Turkey. Between the Christian population of Turkey and Russia, the bonds of religious and political sympathy grew stronger and closer every day, and it could not be otherwise than that, in the natural course of events, Russian influence in Turkey must be predominant. This was only the necessary result of time, and the treaty of 1841. The growth, therefore, of this Russian influence must have been anticipated, and the memorandum of 1844 proves, was anticipated by England herself; and this State paper looks forward evidently to the *action* of Russia modified, restrained by, and concerted with England, as the regulator of the fate of the Ottoman Empire. It is admitted, as we have shewn by Lord John Russell's own language, that the *status quo* of European influence, as represented in Constantinople by the respective privileges of the Greeks and Latins, was violated

by France, and that the French Minister had threatened the Sultan with the French fleet to carry his point. Here, then, was a distinct violation of the established balance against Russia. A long controversy ensued, and finally the Czar declared that he would leave the advantages gained by the French untouched, provided he received in turn from the Porte a *guaranteed* equivalent. Now the only difference, in fact, between Count Nesselrode's statement to Sir Hamilton Seymour, and Prince Menschikoff's demands upon the Sultan, was the *guarantee* of the equivalent. Count Nesselrode always said that an *equivalent* was his ultimatum. Prince Menschikoff required the equivalent to be guaranteed by a treaty: For Lord Stratford de Redcliffe in his dispatch of May 19, 1853, says, explicitly, "of the Porte's intended note, it is but justice to say, *that it declared a readiness to concede every point demanded by Russia, with the single exception of that form of guarantee; I mean an engagement with the force of treaty, which the Porte conceives to be inconsistent with its independence and sovereignty*, and which opinion is more or less entertained by every one who may be supposed to have acquired a competent knowledge of the subject. Blue Books, Part 1, 205.

Taking this, then, as granted, we confess we cannot see, whatever may have been the variation in the style of language used by Count Nesselrode to Sir Hamilton Seymour, and that held by Prince Menschikoff to the Sultan, any real and substantial difference between the object of the mission, as declared at St. Petersburg, and the object as demanded at

Constantinople. The demand of an equivalent implied the guarantee of the equivalent, particularly under the circumstances. For, "it is but justice," says Lord Stratford, in his dispatch of May 22, 1853, after the departure of Prince Menschikoff from Constantinople, "to admit that Russia had something to complain of, in the affair of the holy places; nor can it be denied that much remains to be done for the welfare and security of the Christian population in Turkey. But it is equally true, that a fair measure of reparation has been given to the Russian ambassador," &c. Now, on this latter point, Russia was as much authorized to judge for herself, as England was to judge for her; and as to the great and leading objection afterwards made in the same dispatch, and in the English State papers generally, "as to the dangerous and inadmissible character of the powers which His Majesty's ambassador has sought to obtain at the Sultan's expense," we confess we realise the full force of Count Nesselrode's brief but practical reply to Sir Hamilton Seymour.

"I admitted," says Sir Hamilton Seymour, in the dispatch of May 27th, 1853, "having some considerable time since learned from His Excellency that it was considered essential that the two firmans should be re-inforced by, or, if he pleased, embodied in a convention; but, that there was entirely new matter in the 'Projet de Traite' brought forward by Prince Menschikoff; that there was now question of granting to the Emperor a right of protection over 10,000,000 of Greeks, which would render him more powerful in Turkey than the Sultan himself, *which*

would make them all look up to a foreign sovereign, and not to their own master.

Have they looked, Count Nesselrode replied, *for the last hundred years in any other direction?"*

It is unnecessary to follow the course of negotiations from the departure of Prince Menschikoff to the declaration of war, because the effort of diplomacy was then simply to relieve the parties in controversy from the consequences of the position in which they stood to each other at that point. These efforts having failed, the parties stood, therefore, at their close, just where they were at its commencement. An impartial statement of the whole controversy would appear to be this: The difficulty has arisen, not from any regard to Turkey, nor from any real interest in her Christian subjects, but from the jealousy of the great powers of their respective influence, and seems to be the natural and unavoidable result of the treaty of 1841, and the condition of Turkey. By that treaty, Turkey was deprived of all real independence, her dissolution rendered certain, and Constantinople made the battle-field of foreign and contending interests. In 1852, France having made certain demands by which Russia considered the equilibrium of influences disturbed, the Czar finally required from Turkey a settlement of the local question in dispute, guaranteed by such a diplomatic transaction, whether treaty or note, as would protect the Greek Church for the future; but which in so doing, necessarily owing to the relations between Russia and the mil-

lions of Greek subjects of Turkey, would give extended force and increased energy to Russian influence in the Ottoman Empire. Turkey, sustained directly by the counsel and arms of England and France, refused to enter into any such diplomatic arrangement. Upon this refusal, Russia suspended all diplomatic relations with Turkey, and occupied the Danubian principalities. The allies of Turkey entered the Bay of Besika with their fleets, and Turkey declared war. The points which, we think, demonstrated by the correspondence, are: 1. That France, in the first place, disturbed the *status quo*. 2. That Russia claimed what she considered an equivalent, and England and France sustained the Turkish refusal, on the ground that what was claimed, gave an influence to Russia so large, as to disturb the balance of European power in Turkey. 3. And that it follows, from these facts, that Russia could not yield her claim, without deferring, to the joint and superior influence of France and England; and that thus any termination of the difficulty would be a diminution of influence on one side or the other, and equally a disturbance of the balance which all the powers professed themselves anxious to preserve. Now, whatever we may think of the value of the controversy between Russia and the rest of Europe, it is clear that they are all fighting their own battles; that Turkey is only what she has always been—a prize over which these powers are contending—and not an equal ally, whose interests they are protecting; and that, be the result of this war what it may, it must

end only in a change of masters—in the utter dissolution, or very serious diminution of the “integrity of the Ottoman Empire.” For it has been the fortune of Turkey, in all her alliances, to illustrate the warning of Prince Metternich to Mons. de Saint-Aulaire, “Prenez-y-garde cependant; rien n’est plus utile que l’alliance de l’homme avec le cheval, mais il faut l’être l’homme et non le cheval.”

Considered simply in its effects upon Turkey, this question can have no interest for the American people. But there are some points of view, in which it does assume proportions of a larger consequence:

1. If the war just commenced in Europe, should be prolonged, or widened into a general war, no result can compensate its disastrous action. If Austria and Prussia fail, finally, in devising some ground for diplomatic reconciliation, the war must become a tremendous struggle for power between Russia and England—France, in all probability, reaping the resulting benefits. For, however the other States of Europe may range themselves, these two Empires stand foremost in the contest. We consider them in the fullness of their strength, as both absolutely necessary to the safety and the future of Europe. We think there is, however, this difference between them: England has already touched that point beyond which any *increase* of her power is dangerous to the world, while Russia has not yet developed the matured proportions of that influence which she can fairly use for the world’s benefit. The rest of Europe is in a transition state; its principles

unsettled ; its populations ripe for revolution ; and its territorial limits marked for change. In that change, which is surely coming, Russia and England alone can exercise the influence of established power, and consistent principles. Widely different as are their respective forms of government, they are yet both the natural creation of their respective situations ; and their joint action, in a spirit of justice, would be powerful to shape and control the future developement of Europe. We would not have the power of England positively diminished an iota ; for she has played a great and noble part in the world's history. She has been the foster-mother of commerce, and the founder of arts : nursed at her bosom, great Empires have grown into the perfected manhood of national life ; and in her living language were uttered the first broken sentences of constitutional liberty. But England has presumed too far in her pride of place. Of late, especially, she has interfered rashly, inconsequentially and wrongfully, in every quarter of the globe. The centre of the world's commerce ; secure in her Island position ; fortified almost impregnably in Asia, Africa, and America ; armed with a naval power, unequalled in history, she has subjected the policy of the world to the test of her trading necessities, and has converted the business card of every itinerant bagman, who seeks orders for the hardware of Sheffield, or the dry goods of Manchester, into a proclamation of British possession. The natural growth, therefore, of any counter-balancing European power, is a clear

gain to the world at large ; especially where such a developement neither springs from, nor necessitates a violent invasion of England's present strength.— In this light, the discomfiture of Russia, by the alliance of France and England, will be disastrous to Europe, and dangerous to the world—for it increases the power, and stimulates the ambitious activity of the two most restless kingdoms of Europe—kingdoms, whose natural jealousy has hitherto served as a mutual check. Any such result must give a preponderant continental influence to France ; and should the yearning of France for the waters of the Rhine, and the passion of the revolutionary liberals undertake the re-construction of Europe, as every thing indicates they will do, England must either renew the broken covenant with Russia, or submit to some re-division of Europe, in the interest of Napoleon. But passing by all such speculations, the alliance of England and France for joint action, according to Lord Clarendon, *in both hemispheres*, is a baleful phenomenon in politics. It bodes no good anywhere ; but the Tripartite Convention as to Cuba, illustrates fully its consequences in this country.

2. It is clear, that the allied powers have gone to war, not in the maintenance of rights, or the defense of plain and direct interests, but for the preservation of their influence in the East. A glance at any map which marks the proportion between the territory of Turkey belonging to the Turks, and that occupied by her Christian populations ; the natural sympathy of race and religion, and the history of the last century, prove, beyond cavil, that the influence of Russia in

Turkey has grown largely, systematically and naturally ; that it is the legitimate developement of elements, distributed there by the God of nations, himself ; and that any check upon it is the result of an artificial political system, just, only so far as it works with the natural principles of national progress, and not against them. Now, this Russian influence England and France have combined to neutralize, and they rest their right of interference upon their relations to each other, and their guarantee of Turkish existence in 1841. Now, this is precisely the relation of England, France, and the United States, to Cuba. The natural developement of this country's influence upon Cuba must grow stronger and larger ; the Tripartite Convention rested upon the claim of equal interest, on the part of the European powers, and would, if adopted, have placed the existence of Cuba, in its present condition, under the same sort of treaty guarantee ; and thus the very same principle which has carried the allied fleets into the waters of the Baltic, would have heralded their gracious presence in the Mexican gulf. While, then, the relative interests of the contending powers are, to the American people, of no immediate concern, they may very naturally feel a sympathy with any power which threatens the destruction of an alliance which has professed principles of direct interference with their own interests. More than this, in the present condition of the world, there are certain duties which such a crisis imposes upon this Government.

1. If this war continues, Russia, England and France, have all colonial possessions on this continent. Russia's possessions, on the Pacific, are becoming every day more important ; and the relations of the European powers in the West Indies, with the United States, are becoming every day more threatening. Standing perfectly apart from the European quarrel, has not the United States the perfect right to declare that hostilities can, under no possible circumstance, be allowed to extend to this continent ; that there shall be no change of possession, among the colonial provinces of any of the contending powers ? If the papers are correct, the Government has already been notified of the presence of British vessels of war near the Pacific possessions of Russia ; and if the war between these powers be once allowed to extend to these shores, it will not be long before the United States finds her interests compromised.

If, as the Times of 24th May significantly says, "From Archangel, in the north, to Erzeroum—from the confines of Prussia to *the north-western territories of America*—there rages, or is about to rage, a conflict, gradually drawing within its exterminating vortex the leading nations of the world"—has not this Government a right to insist upon such a precautionary policy on this continent, at least, as will preserve the possibility of her neutrality ? Now, situated as this country is, towards the West Indies and the Pacific coast, we ought distinctly and decidedly to make it known, that European interests cannot influence the political adjustments of this quarter

of the globe; that no change can take place in the relations of the colonial possessions of Europe here, except in subordination to the interest of the "leading powers" of the western world. And would it not be wiser to make such a declaration now, when it would apply with equal justice to all—than afterwards, when, if this war shall become universal, such a declaration may work, indirectly, a violation of our neutrality?

2. A perfectly honest neutrality, is possible only to a strong nation. All history proves, that a weak nation is never allowed to maintain a neutral position, if the interests of greater kingdoms require its services. And this is more specially true of a maritime power: and in the present condition of international relations, a great maritime nation, armed with its due and proportionate naval strength, would be, if faithfully neutral, the great mediating power of the world. But it must be *able* to speak with the authority of might, as well as right. If the fleet of Sir Charles Napier were now in the Gulf, what would be the *force* of our protest.

3. In the present condition of things, and in the complications which the future seems to threaten—if there is one thing more necessary to this Government than another, it is full, accurate, impartial information of the strength, feelings, interests and intentions of the leading European powers. Now, there are two kinds of diplomatic service—the one consists in a direct interference with, and interest in, the political schemes of other nations, in an effort to modify or control the action of other powers, for

our own purposes. And where nations are closely associated, as in Europe, in material and political interests, this service is one of great delicacy, dignity, and difficulty. Situated as the United States are, their interests open scarce any field for a like activity. But we stand, somewhat like the old neutral and trading republic of Venice; and, like her, we might wisely cultivate the other kind of diplomatic service. Their ambassadors were everywhere thoroughly trained for observation; they passed gradually through the circle of national relations, and impartial spectators of the whole field of politics; they supplied the Government with such full and minute information, that it could, at any moment, comprehend the whole scope of European politics, and give each separate event its true significance.—To do this, however, would require a thorough reorganization of our whole diplomatic system, on a higher basis, and upon a vastly more liberal scale, than is tolerated at present. Perhaps this, in the temper of the times, is impossible; but it is certain, that questions of vast importance are casting portentous shadows as they come. If the struggle in Europe assumes the proportions of universal war, this country will have a noble, but difficult, task before it. It may not be able to stand between the contending parties as arbiter; but it can, at least, hold above the hot strife those principles of international right, which would be otherwise trampled out in the struggle, and stand in wise neutrality apart from the bloody follies of older nations. We can preserve, to this continent at least, the blessings and

benefits of a well-guarded peace. But to do this, requires knowledge, strength and temper; and if the United States is to play a proper part in the troubled times at hand, they will need three things: a thoroughly organized diplomatic system to tell them the truth—a navy commensurate with their rank, to support their decisions—and an honest, determined neutrality, as the corner-stone of their policy.

FINIS.

ERRATA.

Page 1, line 18, for "Sobresky" read "*Sobiesky.*"

" 26, " 9, for "injudiciously" read "*injuriously.*"

" 27, " 8, for "united" read "*invited.*"

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